

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claim 19 is amended to correct the noted informality by changing its dependency to claim 18. Claims 1-20 are pending.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant notes, with respect, that the analysis included in the Office Action has not been updated to take into account the amendments to the claims entered by the October 13, 2004 Amendment. Applicant requests that any rejections on the merits issued in the future reflect consideration of the subject matter recited in the presently pending claims.

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Block et al. (U.S. 6,377,938; hereafter “Block”) and Carlsson et al. (U.S. 6,026,291; hereafter “Carlsson”). Applicant traverses the rejection because Block fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed method of managing subscriber billing in a telecommunication network, the method comprising “forming a subscriber billing group, the subscriber billing group comprising two or more subscriber billing accounts; assigning to each subscriber of the subscriber billing group an identification associated with at least one type of access right; and indicating on the basis of the access right, different rights to manage accounts of the subscriber billing group and to carry out predetermined procedures in or between the accounts of the subscriber billing group,” as recited in independent claim 1.

Similarly, the combined teachings of Block and Carlsson fail to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed system for managing billing accounts of several subscribers, wherein each subscriber has a billing account that is charged when services of a telecommunication network are used, the system comprising “one or more subscriber billing groups, wherein each subscriber billing group comprising two or more subscriber billing accounts, access right indicators, each indicating a specific right to manage accounts of the subscriber billing group and to carry out predetermined procedures in or between the accounts of the subscriber billing group, an identification for each subscriber, wherein the identification is associated with at least one access right indicator; and data processing means for carrying out the account managing and the predetermined procedures, as recited in independent claim 7.

Further, the combined teachings of Block and Carlsson fail to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed network element for managing billing accounts with respect to several subscribers, the network element comprising “at least one subscriber billing group, the billing group including two or more subscriber billing accounts, wherein the network element is configured to: recognize a master subscriber that has the right to access the billing group; and

allow the master subscriber to carry out predetermined procedures to the accounts of the subscriber billing group,” as recited in independent claim 20.

In fact, Block teaches separate embodiments. In a first embodiment, there is a one to one correspondence, i.e., each subscriber has one deposit or credit. In another embodiment, one debit or credit covers multiple subscribers (see column 13, lines 56-59). Thus, Block fails to disclose, teach or suggest a single embodiment in which a subscriber billing group if formed which comprises two or more subscriber billing accounts.

Carlsson fails to remedy this deficiency of Block because Carlsson merely teaches the use of a subscription record, wherein one subscriber can have two accounts: one for business calls and another one for private calls (Figure 5). Thus, in Carlsson, a billing group is not associated with multiple subscribers; rather, it includes multiple accounts for a single subscriber.

Further, because Block merely discloses a single account for multiple subscribers, Block fails to disclose, teach or suggest: 1) the assignment of an identification associated with at least one type of access right to each subscriber of the subscriber billing group; 2) the indication of different rights to manage subscriber billing accounts of the billing group; and 3) any predetermined procedures to be performed for or between the accounts of the billing group.

Carlsson fails to remedy this deficiency of Block because, as mentioned above, there is only one subscriber associated with Carlsson’s billing group.

Thus, the combined teachings of Block and Carlsson fail to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention wherein a subscriber billing group includes two or more subscriber billing accounts and access right indicators are utilized to indicate a specific right to manage accounts of the subscriber billing group and to carry out predetermined procedures in or between the accounts of the subscriber billing group. Accordingly, claims 1-20 are patentable.

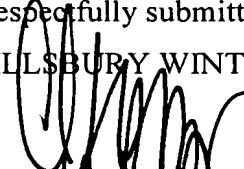
All objections and rejections having been addressed, Applicants request issuance of a notice of allowance indicating the allowability of claims 1-20. If anything further is necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, Applicants request that the Examiner contact Applicants’ undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

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Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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